

## **AMHERST COUNCIL ON AGING MINUTES**

**JUNE 9, 2005**

**Members Present:** Barbara Sutherland (Co-Chair), Al Byam, Rosemary Kofler, Elsie Fetterman, Doris Holden (Treasurer)

**Absent:** Susan Whitbourne, Frank Lattuca, Henry Peirce

**Staff Present:** Nancy Pagano (Interim Director/Program Director), Maura Plante (Program Director/Services), Karen Erman (Management Assistant), Marlene Barnett (Program Coordinator)

**Others:** Jean Haggerty, Marge Babb

### **Welcome**

Meeting called to order at 9:12 AM. Barbara Sutherland, Co- chair welcomed all members and guests. Former COA Chair and now guest, Jean Haggerty, attended the meeting. She asked for support for Stavros Center for Independent Living festivities on July 22<sup>nd</sup> to celebrate the great strides of ADA. COA members voted unanimously to support this celebration. Elsie was concerned about a monetary donation because she wants to make sure that the Social Worker is funded full time. A monetary donation will be discussed after Nancy explains the FY '06 budget vote later in the meeting and how it will affect the Senior Center.

### **Minutes of Meeting**

Minutes of May 12, 2005, were reviewed and accepted as amended.

### **SENIOR TRUST**

#### **Treasurer's Report:**

Doris Holden reported that the value of the investments has gone up a bit. There was one emergency disbursement of funds to a person who was in extreme need of a mattress and some scholarships. The balance in the checking account is \$550.90. The total assets are \$82,078.86. The Treasurer's report was accepted as written.

#### **\$1,000 request for Senior Center Club from Program Grant:**

Nancy requested \$1,000 from the Senior Trust Program Money to supplement the Senior Center Club. The Program money (\$13,500) was donated anonymously. There have been two disbursements (\$2,000 to the Senior Center Club and \$800 for a facilitator for the Caregivers Support Group) leaving a balance of \$10,700. The members unanimously approved the transfer of \$1,000 from Program money to the Senior Center Club.

#### **Thank you card from Elizabeth Smith:**

Maura passed around a Thank you card from Elizabeth Smith the recipient of the mattress from the Senior Trust funds. She was very thankful and said that the mattress has helped her back condition tremendously.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### **Friends Group:**

Nancy passed out by-laws of the *Friends of the Senior Center* drafted by Alan Seewald, Town Council, for members to review. These by-laws will separate the COA from the Friends Group so that we can come into compliance.

#### **AARP Andrus Award of Community Service:**

The COA is nominating Jean Haggerty and several other agencies are nominating her also. Nancy is waiting for their nomination papers and will mail all of them together.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Town Meeting Vote and How It Will Impact the Senior Center:**

Nancy reported that Town Meeting passed the Senior Center budget with no changes from what was presented. One Town Meeting member, Christina Rose, made a motion to restore the Program Director position to full-time out of Reserve Fund money. The motion did not pass, but it was a good effort. Other attempts to cut back budgets were unsuccessful.

Nancy reiterated that the Social Worker will be full-time. The Formula Grant money (\$16,192) goes towards the Social Worker's salary. Barry DelCastilho, Town Manager, and John Musante, Finance Director, also assured Nancy that Maura will be a full-time employee.

Nancy explained the positions in FY '06 at the Senior Center. We will have 4 positions: Director (full-time), Social Worker (full-time), Management Assistant (full-time), and Program Director (4.2 days/Nancy's position). Karen, who holds the Management Assistant position, works full time, but 1/3 of her time is spent doing scheduling of town buildings and working for the Human Rights Dept. and not Senior Center work. Rosemary asked about Marlene's current position at the Senior Center. Nancy explained that she is presently on loan from Public Works for three days a week and she still works there two days a week. Marlene is classified as Program Coordinator.

The budget has three line items: Office Supplies, Dues & Subscriptions, and Center Activities. The FY '05 budget had \$6,000 in Center Activities on paper but there was a verbal agreement with the Town Manager because of salary money left over that \$2,000 more would be added to that line item. Also, that \$1,000 would be added to the Office Supplies line item. In FY'06 only \$6,500 was appropriated for Center Activities and \$1,200 for office supplies. So in reality, this is a cut.

Nancy explained the handout that was prepared for Town Meeting. It tells why the Senior Center is vital to our older residents and some of the programs and services offered. In the future the senior population is growing and we have a strong case for more budget money to assist our elders.

Nancy stated that the COA members and staff need to have a retreat to look to the future to see what direction we are going, what the focus of the Senior Center is, and how we are going to get there. We need a plan for the next five to ten years. The staff is in a team work mode right now and will be providing basic needs and services for seniors in the future. The Senior Center has been moving in this direction for some time.

Rosemary asked what will happen to Marlene this new fiscal year. Nancy explained that she is "on loan" from the DPW and she is here at the Senior Center only 3 days a week. After Town Meeting the Town manager will be addressing that question.

#### **By-Law Recommendations from COA Members:**

Elsie questioned Article X—Employees (page 4). Can COA members be involved in hiring? Nancy stated that the final hiring is done by the Town Manager.

Elsie also stated that the COA should adopt a policy that all citizens of the Town of Amherst are welcome to attend the COA meetings. Also, whatever is passed out to the Council members should be given to the citizens attending. She wants the COA meetings to be inclusive and open. In this way the community can be educated. We are a public entity and should be open to all.

Nancy explained that there are some materials that the COA passes out as a courtesy. However, there are guidelines (Massachusetts Public Records Law) that all boards and committees abide by. There are some things we make available at the COA meetings. Beyond that we are not obligated to pass out everything to guests. If someone wishes a copy of a document, there is a formal form of request for public documents and there is a fee which may include the time involved to search for the material and the time involved reviewing the material to remove exempt items from a requested record. The fee is based on the hourly rate of the lowest paid employee who is capable of performing the task. Additionally, a twenty cents (\$.20 per page copying fee is charged and fifty cents (\$.50) per page for a computer printout.

#### **August Cookout-Party for COA and Staff:**

Nancy explained that for years the COA and staff got together for a cookout. She would like to know if there is any interest in doing this again, perhaps at Look Park or Mill River Recreation area. In August there is no COA meeting and this might be a good time to plan for a cookout.

#### **Gold Headed Cane:**

Nancy passed out information on the history of the Boston Post Cane. She proposes that the COA develop their own policy regarding honoring the oldest resident in the spirit of the cane tradition. Nancy suggested following what the Town of Hadley does regarding the cane and the oldest resident. A ceremony would be held presenting the cane to the oldest Amherst resident. But, the cane would be kept permanently at the Senior Center in a glass case with a plaque listing the cane's recipients. The oldest resident would get a certificate and a pin signifying that

they are a recipient of the cane. Nancy needs volunteers to help to find the oldest resident of Amherst so that we can continue this tradition. Marge Babb and Doris will work on finding the oldest person.

## **STAFF REPORTS**

### **Student Volunteer Wrap Up Report:**

Maura reported that there were approximately 47 students from Amherst College and UMass last semester who volunteered for various programs here at the Senior Center. A few are still doing friendly visiting. We have been very fortunate to have these volunteers. The feedback from elders and students was positive and all had a good experience. This student volunteer program benefits the seniors, the students and the Senior Center.

Jean Haggerty recommended that in the fall the four volunteer student nurses at Ann Whalen Apartments should be added to the statistics. She also stated that there are volunteers from Hilliel House and the Newman center who are cooking meals on Sunday for about 15 to 20 people.

### **Bread Program:**

Marlene reported that the Wednesday bread program is seeing more food coming in to be distributed. The number of people has varied from 45-60 people. There have been some new changes which seem to be going well. Now there is a task list for volunteers every week so that the program runs more smoothly. Also, the food waste is being picked up by the Animal Control Officer.

### **Public Safety & Seniors Picnic July 21<sup>st</sup> at Hadley Young Men's Club:**

The Public Safety and Senior Picnic will be held on Thursday, July 21<sup>st</sup> from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM at the Hadley Young Men's Club. Music will be provided by the Horse Mountain Jazz Band. Tickets are \$5.00 and are available at the Amherst Senior Center, the Fire Dept. or the Police Station. Nancy needs volunteers to staff the grill and to make salads for the picnic. The Horse Mountain Jazz Band donated their time and half the pavilion fee was paid for by the SALT Council.

## **SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES**

### **HVES:**

Elsie reported on the monthly HVES meeting. The feature presentation this month was fiscal policies and the budget. There is a new program called the "Take Charge program". This entails families being paid to take care of their own family members. HVES serves 24 towns and they have several new pilot programs. They have a lot that people can tap into much of which is on their website. Maura stated that she checks the website periodically.

### **Transportation:**

Al Byam reported that the full board met June 8<sup>th</sup> to vote on the budget. As of yet the State budget still has not been set. All cuts have been tabled at this time and Al reported that the Sunday bus schedule will not be cut. This is good news, however, it means that the Transit Authority is taking on new debt. The Board is adamant that there will be no cuts. He stated that the Representatives need to be thanked as they have worked hard for long-term dedicated funding.

### **Nominating Committee:**

Nancy asked Council members to recommend to her people who would be good candidates for the COA and willing to serve. There have been no new applications for the COA vacancy to date.

**Next Meeting is Thursday, July 14th at 9:00 AM.**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:37 AM.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Karen Erman, Management Assistant**